

A singular contradiction is apparent here. Congress declares these local State governments to be illegal governments, and then provides that these illegal governments shall be carried on by federal officers, who are to perform the very duties imposed on its own officers by this illegal State authority. It certainly would be a novel spectacle if Congress should attempt to carry on a legal State government by the agency of its own officers. It is yet more strange that Congress attempts to sustain and carry on an *illegal* State government by the same federal agency.

In this connection I must call attention to the 10th and 11th sections of the bill, which provide that none of the officers or appointees of these military commanders "shall be bound in his action by any opinion of any civil officer of the United States;" and that all the provisions of the act "shall be construed liberally, to the end that all the intents thereof may be fully and perfectly carried out."

It seems Congress supposed that this bill might require construction, and they fix, therefore, the rule to be applied. But where is the construction to come from? Certainly no one can be more in want of instruction than a soldier or an officer of the army detailed for a civil service, perhaps the most important in a State, with the duties of which he is altogether unfamiliar. This bill says he shall not be bound in his action by the opinion of any civil officer of the United States. The duties of the office are altogether civil, but when he asks for an opinion he can only ask the opinion of another military officer, who, perhaps, understands as little of his duties as he does himself; and as to his "action," he is answerable to the military authority, and to the military authority alone. Strictly, no opinion of any civil officer other than a judge has a binding force.

But these military appointees would not be bound even by a judicial opinion. They might very well say, even when their action is in conflict with the Supreme Court of the United States, "That court is composed of civil officers of the United States, and we are not bound to conform our action to any opinion of any such authority."

This bill and the acts to which it is supplementary are all founded upon the assumption that these ten communities are not States, and that their existing governments are not legal. Throughout the legislation upon this subject they are called "rebel States," and in this particular bill they are denominated "so-called States," and the vice of illegality is declared to pervade all of them. The obligations of consistency bind a legislative body as well as the individuals who compose it. It is now too late to say that these ten political communities are not States of this Union. Declarations to the contrary made in these three acts are contradicted again and again by repeated acts of legislation enacted by Congress from the year 1861 to the year 1867.

During that period, while these States were in actual rebellion, and after that rebellion was brought to a close, they have been again and again recognized as States of the Union. Representation has been apportioned to them as States. They have been divided into judicial districts for the holding of district and circuit courts of the United States, as States of the Union only can be districted. The last act on this subject was passed July 23, 1866, by which every one of these ten States was arranged into districts and circuits.

They have been called upon by Congress to act through their legislatures upon at least two amendments to the Constitution of the United States. As States they have ratified one amendment, which required the vote of twenty-seven States of the thirty-six then composing the Union. When the requisite twenty-seven votes were given in favor of that amendment—seven of which votes were given by seven of these ten States—it was proclaimed to be a part of the Constitution of the United States, and slavery was declared no longer to exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction. If these seven States were not legal States of the Union, it follows as an inevitable con-